the five months April to August, the losses over 50 miles from the land were 175, an average of 35 per month ; during the period from September to December, the ships sunk at this distance from the land for the whole four months only reached a total of six of which four were sunk in September.[59]

The most gratifying feature of this success was the increased security achieved for the brave mariners who were risking their lives for their country.

" The result of this from the point of view of life saving was enormous ; it meant that a crew, even when their ship was torpedoed, and they had to take to their boats, were rarely more than 10 or 20 miles from the land, and probably had a coastal patrol boat to their assistance in less than half an hour. This was a very different ordeal from that which had to be faced in the first six months of 1917, when the ships were sunk 200 and 300 miles from the land, and when the majority of those who managed to get into their boats died from exposure before they reached land or were picked up.

Increased Safety for Seamen

Moreover, it practically eliminated the danger of the master or chief engineer being taken prisoner by the submarine. This was a device which the Germans had adopted with a view of impairing morale, and it is a credit to the Mercantile Marine that they stood for so long the risks to which they

were opposed with very little chance of retaliation.
How long their courage would have stood the
test had the convoy system not altered conditions
at sea is a debatable question."